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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: ZELAYA'S RETURN TO HONDURAS; PRESIDENT  
CRISTINA KIRCHNER TO NEW YORK; 09/23/09; BUENOS AIRES

#### 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international stories are focused on the implications of ousted President Zelaya's return to Honduras; as well as President Cristina Kirchner's first formal meeting with IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn in the framework of her trip to the US.

#### 2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "(Zelaya's return to Honduras) drew surprise at the UN, which afterwards gave way to concern"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion's" Washington-based correspondent Silvia Pisani writes (09/23), "In just 24 hours, the heads of State attending the UN General Assembly initially reacted with surprise at Manuel Zelaya's return to Honduras but, later on, they showed concern over it, particularly those that are most directly affected by it.

"... Behind the scenes, the Brazilian delegation's 'mounting concern' was remarkable. Then, it transcended that the Lula administration requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council. However, the initiative was not supported by some Latin American countries, particularly Mexico and Costa Rica. The latter insisted on prioritizing President Oscar Arias' mediator role. On the other hand, the countries aligned with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez did not believe either that the UN Security Council should intervene. Last night, Brazil asked for regional support to move on with its initiative.

"Last night, they feared the de facto government of Roberto Micheletti could decide to denounce the Vienna Treaty and suspend the inviolability of the diplomatic territory by storming into the Brazilian Embassy to arrest Zelaya...

"Formally speaking, the Barack Obama administration has called for calm, dialogue and respect for the territory of the diplomatic mission. Ian Kelly, the State Department spokesperson, emphasized that it is 'a universally accepted principle in international relations.'"

- "Pressures to find a way out"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (09/23), "Unsolved issues can re-emerge at any moment, and when they do reappear they do not do it in a gentle way... What happens today in Honduras abides by this rule.

"Manuel Zelaya's abrupt return to Tegucigalpa revived an unsolved conflict... Actually, Brazil seems to seek to prevent this coup from setting a precedent. In Honduras the de facto regime denounced Lula Da Silva's interference. They do not realize that given its importance, Brazil cannot allow a repetition of a disaster performed by an arrogant Honduran minority. If this works in Honduras, it

could work in many other places when economic havoc weakens democracies...

"... Nevertheless, Zelaya is in his country and this is a step forward in a badly needed negotiation. Additionally, the prevailing idea is that Washington was aware of the move given that the US takes Lula seriously. Barack Obama has already had his battle with Republican 'hawks,' who fiercely repudiated the agreements with Moscow on the antimissile shield. Honduras is a 'small fly' compared to such a controversy. Perhaps, precisely because of this, the time has come for the White House to take seriously this conflict."

- "The weakest link"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" carries an opinion piece by international columnist Mario Wainfeld, who opines (09/23), "The official explanation (President Manuel Zelaya suddenly arrived at the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa) sounds naive. However, even if one believes it (everything indicates that there was a previous agreement), President Lula da Silva's commitment with his Honduran counterpart is remarkable... Lula da Silva's abilities as an important national and regional leader are broadly recognized... He has consolidated Brazil as a world and regional power."

"... The Honduran de facto regime does not seem a feasible regime in the medium term. A small nation which is 'not doomed to success' is not a good basis for survival in the event its government is internationally isolated. As never before in the cruel history of the 'backyard,' no state acknowledged the coup mongers. Nonetheless, the end is far from being automatic in the short run, given the radicalization of coup mongers, the presence of troops on the streets, the curfew and the siege."

"Of course, 'one had to do something about it' in order to alter the pro-coup inertia..."

"Obviously enough, Lula da Silva believes the case is a crucial one... Almost one century ago, Lenin explained that socialism could emerge at the weakest link of the capitalistic system. Many Latin American presidents notice today that Honduras could be the weakest link in a chain that is worth keeping - the unusual coexistence of popular democratic regimes that guarantee sustainability to the neighborhood."

"... Some USG agencies, some members of the government and political leaders are empathic with Micheletti, his methods and goals. One could argue whether President Barack Obama, who does not agree with them, is doing everything he can to defend the Honduran democratic system. It is a thorny debate and it is clear that the US foreign policy cannot give a 180-degree turn and that Obama is (in the best case) the most advanced leader his country can have although he is not a revolutionary. It is undeniable that the Obama administration's reaction to the coup was quite different from what the USG reaction to coups d'etat used to be in the past. Yesterday, while Obama was lecturing on climate change, the State Department made calls for peace without moving one single finger in favor of coup mongers."

"Change is partial and slow, but some positive perspectives are ahead. Of course, the luck of our nations depends on our own actions, which explains and highlights Lula's decision. The time when he made it, while the UN General Assembly was gathering, gives it a special resonance..."

- "Cristina (Kirchner) toughly rebuffs IMF head on the eve of the G20 Summit"

Santiago Chelala, on special assignment in New York for business-financial "El Cronista," writes (09/23), "... Yesterday the (Argentine) Government had its first formal meeting with IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn... Expectation is focused on the search of funding, which could imply a return to the IMF... or the issuance of public securities, based on a previous negotiation with creditors ('holdouts' and the Paris Club)..."

"In an exclusive panel with (IMF head) Strauss-Kahn, Larry Summers, President Barack Obama's chief economic advisor, and former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, Cristina reiterated the need to create an

institution aimed at creating working positions rather than devoted to financial issues. She also complained that the IMF took Argentina as its best student during the '90s. She said: 'Without following those prescriptions, we grew at Chinese rates and we will also grow this year.'

"Strauss-Khan turned down the Argentine initiative to create a new institution...

"The Argentine President also said that it is necessary to have egalitarian global rules - 'While countries like ours were asked to have tax and trade surplus, the US was spending more than what it should. There should not be two different handbooks according to the country.'

"... In the morning, the Argentine president received businessmen, who criticized the lack of judicial security in the country and warned over the country-risk..."

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